Work Assigned to the Staff of New Zonal Railways

2074. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the then Minister of Railways had set up seven new Zonal Railway Head Quarters in 1996, to coordinate the development work of the Railways in States;

(b) whether this involved setting up of an organisation of 1200 railways officers and staff, at a cost of Rs. 40 crore per year;

(c) whether it is also a fact that no particular job has been assigned to these seven new Zonal Head Quarters; and

(d) if so, what are Government's views on this matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) No., Sir, Only six new zonal Railway Headquarters were announced in 1996. Later on a seventh zone at Bilaspur was approved in 1998. The new zones have been proposed keeping in view the factors like size, workload, accessibility, traffic patterns and other operating/administrative requirements consistent with the needs of economy.

(b) The seven new zones were initially proposed to be set up with around 1000 officers and staff at the then cost of approximately Rs. 40 crores each for the first six zones and Rs. 100 crores for Bilaspur zone.

(c) No, Sir. Certain specific activities of one/two divisions have been taken over by the administration of new zones in addition to preliminary activities of land acquisition, offices, staff quarters, communication facilities, and other infrastructural requirements. Some Projects have also been allotted to new zones for study and implementation on zonal railways.

(d) Does not arise.

Railway Safety Fund

2075. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have sanctioned, on a one time basis. Rs. 17000 crore for the Railway Safety Fund;

(b) whether this amount is to be spent on track renewals, modernisation of assets, strengthening of bridges, etc;

(c) whether 65 per cent to 70 per cent of rail accidents are attributed to human error: if so, whether this safety fund would also address to the human factor in rail accidents; and

(d) if so, what are Government's views on this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) With a view to wipe out the arrears of replacements and renewals on the railways in a fixed time schedule, the Government has decided to set up a non-lapsable Special Railway Safety Fund of Rs. 17,000 crores.

(b) This fund is to be used for renewal of over-aged assets such as tracks, bridges, signalling gears and rolling stock and for other safety enhancement works like track circuiting, modernisation of specific safety equipment, training of staff etc.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. 65 to 70 per cent of rail accidents are attributed to human error. Some part of the Safety Fund would also be used for upgrading training facilities at Training Institutes. Better training of operating and maintenance staff is expected to reduce human error causing train accidents.

Flat Wheel Detection System

2076. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to develop a flat wheel detection system to identify faulty wheels on rolloing stock, which cause permanent damage to track and often lead to train accidents;

(b) if so. the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken t6 meet the problem of sudden impact caused by flat wheels on rolling stock, which is the main cause of fractures on the tracks?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL): (a) to (d) System of detection pf flat wheels by manual observation is already in vogue. It has been intensified and is also being reviewed for further improvement. The main cause of fractures on track is not wheel flats on rolling stock.

To explore the possibility of eliminating human element in detection of wheel flats,Research, Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO)/ Lucknow with technical support of Indian Institute of Technology/Kanpur has taken up a project "Development of Wheel Flat Detection System".